

POKEMON: Game's servers have been prone to crashes

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the park, allowing users to set multiple lures in close proximity.

People are also communicating about the game online. Corey Ford created the Facebook group, "Pokemon Go Pendleton, Oregon," for players to arrange meeting times and places in town. There's only one Poké Stop near the Ford family home off of Highway 11. Along with their two sons and roommate Anthony Hatcher, Corey and wife Heather visit downtown Pendleton regularly to play.

For Corey, 32, and Heather, 29, who grew up watching the Pokémon television show that premiered in 1997, Pokémon Go is a childhood dream come true, Heather said. They believe Pokémon Go is just as popular in their age group as it is to kids and teenagers.

"You see a lot of kids running around, but I see a lot more adults playing," Corey said.

Prodigal Son Brewery and Pub owner Tim Guenther didn't know that his business at 230 SE Court Ave is designated as a Poké Stop when asked Tuesday. He sees potential for businesses to incorporate Pokémon Go in their marketing to attract customers.

In addition to Poké Stops, users travel to gyms in order to train and battle other users' Pokémon.



Corey and Heather Ford play Pokémon Go on their smartphones Tuesday in Pendleton. The pair started a Pendleton Facebook page for local Pokémon Go users in the area as a way to get together and play.

"You see a lot of kids running around, but I see a lot more adults playing,"

— Corey Ford, Pokémon Go player

Gym locations in Pendleton include Pendleton Arts Center, Heritage Station Museum, First United Methodist Church and Pendleton Public Library.

Pendleton Arts Center director Roberta Lavadour, who downloaded Pokémon Go Tuesday, also didn't know the location was designated as a gym. She plans to make a sign outside and set up tables and chairs for people to play.

Pokémon Go has also raised some safety concerns. When users open the game on their phones, a disclaimer reads, "Remember to be alert at all times. Stay aware of your surroundings." Some users haven't followed this warning.

Heath said he was walking down Court Avenue Tuesday when saw a semi-truck driver slam on the brakes and get out of his car to catch a Pokémon.

Hermiston Police Department also reminded people on their Facebook page Tuesday: "No trespassing and don't use your phone while you're driving, skating, pedaling or operating some other type of vehicular gadget."

The game's servers have also been prone to crashes, perhaps overwhelmed by the number of users playing at once. But for the majority of players, Pokémon Go has been well-received.

"When it's up and running, it's really fun to play," Heather said. "It keeps you moving."

Contact Will Denner at wdenner@eastoregonian.com.

WATER: Farms with water rights after 1956 ordered to stop irrigating May 3

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than 1,650 acres with senior water rights to the Umatilla River and McKay Reservoir.

Their complaint against the WID was filed in federal court, and claims the district worked up a water delivery scheme that benefited three large farms with junior rights — L&L Farms, Eagle Ranch and Amstad Farms. For more than a decade, water has been taken from the plaintiffs and redistributed to junior rights holders in violation of Oregon's "first in time, first in right" basis, according to the lawsuit.

Meanwhile, the same group of growers claims the Water Resources Department failed to enforce the law earlier this irrigation season. On May 3, Watermaster Greg Silbernagel issued an order that, due to decreasing flow in the Umatilla River, farms with water rights after 1956 stop irrigating immediately.

But when several of the defendants later called upon WID for water under their 1903 and 1907 primary rights, the suit claims they were denied. Dixie Echeverria said she met with Silbernagel on June 22, where he again declined to take action.

"There's no boots on the ground in Umatilla County in the Westland Canal," Echeverria said.

Mike Ladd, region manager for the Water Resources Department in Pendleton, said the depart-

ment can't comment on pending litigation.

The lawsuit against WID alleges the district used four tactics to misappropriate water to the junior rights holders, including granting flood water contracts that facilitated overpumping. The district also failed to properly monitor water usage through the irrigation season, ignored priority dates for water rights and used so-called "limited water" delivery contracts to illegally divert water from McKay Reservoir to junior users, according to the suit.

Echeverria said she also asked the WID to list the farms where water was shut off after Silbernagel's final order on May 3, but wasn't able to get an answer.

WID Manager Mike Wick said they take the allegations seriously and are continuing to work with their attorneys on a response. The district is responsible for approximately 260 users.

"It's the intent of the district board to have the district operate in a way that provides the maximum amount of benefit to the maximum amount of members served," Wick said following a board meeting on July 5.

The next WID board meeting will be held at 1 p.m. Monday, July 18 at the Stafford Hansell Government Center in Hermiston.

Contact George Plaven at gplaven@eastoregonian.com or 541-966-0825.

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